

A  
VVinding-Sheet  
FOR  
ENGLAND'S  
MINISTRY

Which hath a Name to live, but is dead.

SENT TO

*John Owen*, called Dr. in that *Ministry*, and late Vice-Chancellor of *Oxford*.

And is in *ANSWER* to his Printed Paper concerning *TITHES*.

O R,

An Examination of those Scriptures by which he seems to  
to prove, *That the publike Maintenance for Preachers of the Gospel  
by way of Tithes, is a Gospel-Maintenance*. But upon examination  
thereof by the Scriptures, he is found to be a subverter of them,  
and, *That Tithes is no lawful maintenance for Gospel-Ministers*.

FRIEND,



Have lately perused thy printed paper concerning the power of the  
*Supreme Magistrate in Religion, and the Worship of God*; as also  
concerning *Tithes*: All which thou hast presented in three Questions;  
and (as thou saidst) resolved. Now let me tell thee, Sir, I have  
nothing for any man to present his conclusions (as thou hast  
done) writing counter-theses and then adding things. My manner is  
at this time to state to thee briefly which *Scriptures* *Tithes* and *Maintenance*  
are in the Bible; then to lay down their sense, and whence it comes;  
and then to show thee for what rather than they will and have  
said, and what thou art in conscience bound to say, and what  
thou art bound to do, and what thou art bound to avoid.

and their testimony against them by death. But surely where such cruelty hath been exercised, and too often used upon tender Consciences, or upon men supposed to disrespect the publick Preachers of the Gospel, upon the account of their maintenance, for food and raiment convenient for them for preaching, they had need be upon infallible grounds, *First*, That they are true Ministers of Christ Jesus, sent forth by him to preach the everlasting Gospel. *Secondly*, That their lives and practices are agreeable to the Gospel Ministers in the primitive times; and *Thirdly*, that Tithes are the undoubted maintenance for such Ministers, before ever they should have proceeded to the imprisonment of mens bodies, and forcing from them their estates, for not paying of them; and if you cannot all manifest your selves by these things, then give me leave to tell you all, you are deceivers, and not Gospel-preachers, and the Lord will require the blood of the innocent at your hands. But I shal come to the question propounded by thee, and examine thy proofs for tythes.

*Question, Whether it be convenient, that the present way of the maintenance of Ministers or Preachers of the Gospel be removed and taken away, or changed into some other provision.*

Which Question thou hast in eight particular answered, and towards the close of thy Answer saiest; *That to take away the publick maintenance, viz. the Tithes, provided, as thou saist, in the providence of God for the publick dispensers of the Gospel, upon presences of presents inconvenience, or promises of future provision, is a contemps of the care and faithfulness of God towards his Church, and is in plain terms down-right robbery.* And further thou saist, that to entitle a Nation unto such an action, by imposing it on them without their consent, is down-right oppression.

1. I shall first speak to the Question propounded, and in answer therunto, do positively affirm, and say contrarily, That the present way of maintenance for Ministers by Tithes, is not onely a great oppression, and intollerable in a Christian Common-wealth, or amongst men professing Christ Jesus to be their King, Priest, and Prophet, but also Antichristian, and contrary to the maintenance and practice of Gospel-ministers: And that not to remove such an oppression, were little less, in plain English, then direct robbery, or to uphold wickedness by a Law, God having appointed no such maintenance for Gospel-preachers, but is a maintenance, as you may read, set up by Pope Gregory, the tenth, in the year 1211. and not by Christ, nor was it ever practised by the Apostles or Disciples of Christ in the primitive times: And Cook in the third part of his *Institutes* also testifies, that Tenth and First-fruits are but a late Innovation, and claimed by the Pope as Successor to the Jewish High-priest: and Doctor Seamor, one of your own Divines, confessed before the Committee of Parliament, in the year 1643. that their Call to the ministry had it in its first rise from the Pope of Rome; it follows then, your maintenance must be from thence also.

Now that Tithes is an oppression and an unrighteous thing, examine the sufferings of diverse of the Martyrs in Queen Maries dales, recorded by Fox in his *Acts and Monuments*, viz. John Wickliffe, John Waker Brute, William Thorpe, and others, who suffered in flames for their testimony against Tithes: And that this Age is not without a faithful testimony, see the sufferings of the Christians untill death in our daies; as Thomas Heywood, John Calton, William Fyke, William Tucker, Stephen Tasson, Arnold Tappin, William Symonds, and others, who in several Goals of this Nation finished their testimony against Tithes, by suffering imprisonment untill death and thou shalt find it as intollerable to be borne by all Christians, as it is intollerable to be borne by all

But because I desire that the truth may prevail, and that it may be made manifest to all that have but a seeing eye, or a hearing ear; I shall examine the strength of the proofs by those very Scriptures which thou hast quoted to prove Tithes a fit maintenance for the publick dispensers of the Gospel.

Thy first proof is 1 Cor. 9. 4. in which place the Apostle saith, *They that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* Now I appeal to all indifferent men, that do not suffer the thick vail of false Doctrine to remain as scales upon their eyes, whether this text pleads for a maintenance by Tithes, or no: If thou hadst known what it is to live of the Gospel, thou wouldst have cried out against the oppressing of tender consciences to maintain thee, and not have cried out to the civil power, for fear that the oppression should be removed. FRIEND! Is forcing from people the tenth part of their hard labour and estates, to maintain your generation in pride, idleness, and fulness of bread, a living of the Gospel? If this be to live of the Gospel, 'tis a life the Apostles and true Ministers of Christ never lived, nor their Lord and Master ever commanded; who when he sent forth his Disciples to preach, charged them not to take any thing for their journey, nor two coats, no scrip, no bread, nor any money in their purses, *Mark 6. 8, 9.* But now you are so far from observing Christs doctrine, and his commands, that your generation walk quite contrary: for instead of going forth without provision, you will not go forth unless it be well assured unto you before-hand. The true laborers in Christs Vineyard, I say, never contracted for a settled maintenance, nor divined for money, as you do; but as they had freely received, so they freely gave, and when they had done Christs work, received Christs wages, but not compelled peoples estates from them, nor for being unwilling to part with it, cast their bodies into prison, as many of you have done. Now Friend, because thou art ignorant of Christs doctrine, and of the Gospel-ministers maintenance, as also of the Apostles words before by thee quoted, I shall let thee know, that to live of the Gospel, is to receive what is freely administered unto thee: Or thus: The true Ministers of the Gospel first plant a Vineyard, and then partake of the fruit thereof: Or thus, They receive temporal things of those to whom they sow spiritual things, 1 Cor. 9. 11. Yet (lest any should be mistaken, as though the Apostle would be so maintained) the Apostle saith, I have used none of these things, neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me, *vers. 15.* By which thou seest plainly, that the Apostle and true Minister of the Gospel, was no mercenary Preacher nor hireling, but freely as he had received, so he freely gave: he was so far from compelling any to maintain him for preaching, as your fraternity do, that he denied his Christian liberty, and wrought with his hands: I say, Paul sought for no reward from men for preaching the Gospel; as you all do, but saith he, If I do this thing willingly, I have my reward; and what is my reward, saith he, verily this, *That when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel, vers. 18.*

Now let all the world of unbelievers see, how contrary the practice of the Ministers of the Church of England is from the true Ministers of Christ, and how chargeable your Gospel is, even so dear hath it been made to some, that it hath cost them their lives in nasty prisons; when as the true Ministers Gospel is without charge, and is freely preached to all that will receive it. And saith the true Prophet, *Isa. 55. every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and buy wine and milk without money, and without price:* This is the voice of the true Prophets of the Lord, but the false Prophets they look for their gain from their quarters: And even as Trespers Rabbins wait for a man, so do they murder in the way by confute, *Isaia 56.*

Thy next proof for Tithes is this, *Gal. 6. 6.* the words of the Apostle are these

that thou art a teacher in the Word, *commandeth upon him that teacheth, in all good things.* Truly, Friend, wert thou wilfully blind, or willingly ignorant, thou wouldst not produce this text to prove Tithes a lawful maintenance for Gospel-ministers, but wouldst ingeniously confess, and in singleness of heart say, *This is from the text, and Tithes are Antichristian.* There needs no other confutation of thee herein, then the aming of the words themselves, which I recommend to thy review, and all men else who can but read English. *Friend*, be not deceived, nor do thou any longer endeavour to deceive others: for though thou maist do so, yet the Lord will not be mocked, nor the true Christians deluded by such lines of confusion and palpable darkness, as thou wouldst draw over the minds and the understandings of the civil powers of the earth, who have drunk down error for truth, even as the fishes drink water: and this they and other silly people do, under the specious pretences of your being Ministers of the Gospel, when as in truth the Gospel of Christ you are strangers unto, and so are ignorant of its maintenance. Bee advised by a lover of the truth, to learn wisdom, and no longer to make a trade of the Scriptures: but let the time pass, wherein thou hast walked in the vanity of thy mind, contrary unto truth and sound doctrine, suffice; and peradventure the Lord will wink at thy ignorance, and accept of thy repentance; for the Scriptures were not given forth to make a gain of, but to be believed and fulfilled in their season, and they are profitable for instruction, for correction, for reproof, that so the man of God may be made perfect: which doctrine of perfection you all deny, and so are not found in the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, but out of it, and are strangers and enemies to it.

The third Scripture thou bringest, is *Luke 10.7.* where our Lord Jesus Christ in his Commission to his Disciples, commands them to remain in whatsoever house they should enter, *eating and drinking such things as they give; for saith he, The laborer is worthy of his hire.*

I shall now examine whether you and your fraternity be such as Christ sent forth to labour in his Vinyard, or whether you be not such as beat his servants, (which from time to time he sent forth, and when the Son came, killed him also, that so the Inheritance might be theirs.) First then, Are you *Lambs*, as the true Ministers of Christ were, *verse the third of the same Chapter*, (& as the true Ministers of Christ are at this day amongst wolves?) Or are you not the Wolves your selves, sucking the blood, and tearing the flesh of the Lambs, and they do not resist you? Secondly, Are you such as go forth without money in your purses, and without scrip and shoes, saluting no man by the way, as Christs Disciples did? *verse 4.* Or do you not instead thereof, go forth well accommodated and provided with all these things, and rather then you will stir, be assured of one hundred pounds by the yeer, and seldom less, but often times more? And in your going forth, do you salute no man by the way? Or do you not rather complement with all you know, and court every man in power (who will be lead by you) for Augmentations, Pluralities, or greater livings and preferments then you either want or deserve? Thirdly, Do you say, Peace be to the House wherinto you enter, as the true Ministers of Christ did, and still do? Or do you not instead thereof, either sit down in your own great Parsonage-Houses, and there Lord it more like Kings in their Palaces, then like despised Ministers of the Gospel? Or if you enter into other mens Houses, whether instead of saying, *Peace be unto it*, you do not proclaim war, and with Swords, Staves, Bailiffs, or Constables, force your selves in, and take by violence, their goods from them, as famous your bellies, and your unsatiable lusts of the tents of mens labours and of the things that are not nothing, but borrow no spiritual things from you. Fourthly,

Are you such as eat and drink such things as are set before you, as the true Ministers of Christ did, and still do? Or do you not devour Widows Houses, and pretence make long prayers? Fifthly: Are you such as are content with your wages and do you receive it from those onely that set you to labour? Or do you not require pay from those that know you to be Loyerers, and never set you to work? Friends and people, examine the case whether it be not so; if so, they have no title to a Gospel-Maintenance, no more then they can evidence themselves to be Christs Ministers, and which maintenance is no more by Tythes, then they can prove themselves to be Gospel-Preachers, which by their Doctrine and Practice appears they are not.

The fourth Scripture thou bringest to prove Tythes a Gospel-Maintenance, is the 1 Cor. 9. 7. 11. Where the Apostle saith thus, *Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charge? who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the fruits thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the flock?* This is thy proof for Tythes: To which I say, thou hast more need to be pittied, then refused, as being wholly ignorant of the scope of the Apostle in that place; he is so far from exacting a forced maintenance, especially upon the account of his Ministry, that he thus reasoneth with the *Corinthians*, *Though* [saith he] *I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am so you, for the seal of mine Apostleship* [saith he] *are ye in the Lord*, verse the second of the same Chapter; and from thence argueth as before in the seventh verse. Now say I; If you would follow the example of the Apostle, and do as he did, to wit, Sow spiritual things indeed and in truth, and not preach your own imaginations for Christs Gospel, then should they to whom you sow spiritual things, administer unto you their temporal things, and that as freely too, as you should administer your spiritual things; but if you shall reap where you sow not, as now most of you all do, then must we needs deny you to abide in the Apostles Doctrine, and say you are none of Christs ministers, and deserve none of his maintenance, but are Vsurpers, Hirelings, and no Gospel-ministers, and deserve punishment rather then pay.

The fifth Scripture quoted by thee to prove tythes a Gospel-maintenance, is in the same Chapter, the 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13. verses; Which because I will not repeat, they being all concerning the same Argument before spoken of, I shall refer the perusal of them to the impartial Reader, and he will clearly see those texts are so far from proving tythes a Gospel-maintenance for Gospel-ministers, that the Apostle is direct against a settled maintenance; first, by his Argument in the 9th. verse, where it is said, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn;* by which it appears the Ox must tread out the Corn, whose mouth is not to be muzzled. Are you such as tread out the Corn? If so; then we shall not allow that your mouths should be muzzled, but have food and rayment convenient for you, as the true Ministers of Christ have; and were you such, you would therewith be contented; and of this you need not (nay you would not) doubt; for I never yet saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed beg their bread, as you and your seed have done, the more are you to be pittied. The other Argument is from the Apostles words in the 11. and 12. verses, where he saith, *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? yet nevertheless* [saith he] *we have not ased this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ.* So far was the Apostle from owning a settled maintenance, that you see he denied the lawful use of his Christian liberty; nay, let me say further, A settled maintenance is most unreasonable and unjust for Gospel Ministers, because they are to be obedient always to Christs Commands, and Christs Work is not always in one place, and therefore can have no settled maintenance: I say, his Ministers



And to be paid where they do their work, sometimes in one City, and sometimes in another, and where they sow, there are they to reap, and not to reap where they sow not: so that we deny you and your settled maintenance to be of Christ, but such are out from Christ's way, and therefore cannot pay you the one, nor allow you the other.

The sixth and seventh Scriptures quoted by thee, is in *Psal. 2. 8. & Isa. 49. 23.* Where in the first, the Prophet David speaking, as I may say, in the person of Christ, (the Lord having in the seventh verse said, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; goe on and*) saith, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heavens for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession: And as to that place in Isaiah,* where the Prophet saith, *Kings shall be thy Nursing-fathers, and their Queens thy Nursing-mothers; and they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed thus wait for me.* I say, that neither of these two texts is to the matter of tythes, or maintenance intended by thee; for the one speaks of Christ his being the begotten Son of the Father, and of the greatness of the Sons Dominion, and of his power over the Heathens, and over the counsels which the Rulers take against him; and is also a prophesie of their destruction; for saith he, *Thou shalt break them with a Rod of Iron, and dash them in pieces like a Pottery Vessel.* And the other text is concerning the Lords owning of the Gentiles, and setting up a Standard to the people; and because the Lord will own them, and bring them in to be his people, which were not his people, therefore it is that Kings shall be their nursing-fathers, and Queens their nursing-mothers, &c. and they shall not be ashamed thus wait for him. Friend, hadst thou a discerning in the things of God, thou wouldst have seen also, that part of this prophesie is to be fulfilled upon the oppressors of the children of God, even upon the Hirelings, and those that prey upon the Captives of the Lord, *Verf. 25. of the same Chapter;* and the Lord saith, *He will contend with them that contend with his people, and will save his children; and they that oppress them shall eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, and all flesh shall know that God is the Saviour and Redeemer of his people, even the holy one of Jacob: Verf. 26.* And now let the wise in heart judge whether these Scriptures hitherto quoted by thee, speak any thing as to the maintenance of Ministers by tythes, or not.

The eighth and ninth places to prove the publike maintenance by way of tythes, to be a fit maintenance for publike dispensers of the Gospel, are these, *Gen. 14. 20. Heb. 7. 4. 5. and 1 Cor. 9. 14.* To the two first which speak of *Abraham's* paying the tenth of the spoils to *Melchisedeck*, and also of *Levi's* receiving of tythes, is nothing at all to the maintenance of Gospel-Dispensers, for which end thou quotest them: And without controversie that Priesthood is changed, for it made nothing perfect; and another priesthood is arisen, who is made not after the Law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, who hath put an end to the first priesthood, and consequently to tythes also, and to the Doctrine of all such Hirelings as will not preach without gifts and rewards. The other text being the *1 Cor. 9. 14.* which saith, *they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel,* hath been largely spoken to already; and therefore I shall conclude, and tell thee, that thou hast proved nothing by Scripture, that tythes is a Gospel-maintenance, or that the dispensers thereof are to be afforded tythes by way of maintenance for preaching the Gospel.

It now remains to make it appear as well to thee, as to all men else, that you who call your selves Ministers of the Church of England, are neither Ministers of the Gospel, nor of the Church of England; so, I shall leave wise men to judge whether

you deserve to be maintained and upheld as Ministers of the Gospel, yea or no.

First then, I say, you are not true Ministers of the Letter, inasmuch as you preach contrary therunto; & that I shall instance in these particulars following: *As first*, you say, that the holy Law of God cannot be kept by the best of Saints while they live upon earth. Which doctrine is contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures; and to the experiences of the Saints recorded therein: for David said that he had kept them; *Psal. 119. 166, 167, 198. verses.* And St. John saith, *That hereby shall the Saints know that they know him; so wit, if they keep his commandments; 1 Joh. 2. 3.* intimating, that he that doth not keep the commandments of God, doth not know him: and again, *He that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; vers. 4.* What Ministers are you then, that not onely preach contrary to the Letter of the Scripture, but also contrary to the experience of the Saints? *Secondly* you say there is no perfection to be attained here, and so preach a doctrine contrary to the Letter of the Scriptures, for Christ commanded his Disciples *to be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect*: and the Apostles doctrine was for the perfecting of the Saints; and he said *he spake wisdom among them that were perfect*: this being so, I shall leave all sober men to judge, whether you be true Ministers of the Letter: and yet are so bold as to say, *you make the Scriptures your rule.* I could clearly instance in many more particulars, that you are not true Ministers of the Letter of the Scriptures, but these are sufficient.

*Secondly*. I affirm, That you are not Ministers of the Spirit neither, of which the Apostles were able Ministers, for you (contrary to the Scriptures, and to the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ) say, *Thine Revelation is ceased*: whereas our Saviour himself expressly saith, *No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, Mat. 11. 27.* So then its evident enough, that all you who deny Revelation, know neither the Father, nor the Son: whom to know is life eternal, and without the knowledge of whom you cannot know the mind of the Spirit: for the Spirit of the Lord revealeth not the things of its self to any, but to those that receive the teaching of the Father and the Son; and no man can know the Father and the Son, but by Revelation. So that it appears to all men of a good understanding, that you are neither Ministers of the Spirit, nor of the Letter.

Now since it is thus evident, that you are no Ministers of the Spirit, as the true Ministers were, nor yet true Ministers of the Letter; Whose Ministers, may some say, are they? I answer: You are Ministers of Antichrist, and found to be in the doctrine of the Church of Rome; whose belly is your god, whose glory is your shame, who mind earthly things: you are fruitless trees cumbering the ground, and whose end is to be burnt and consumed by the breath of his mouth, and by the brightness of his coming; and this will be your reward and portion without speedy Repentance; and turning from your wickedness, whereby you craftily deceive the simple, and mislead the innocent whom the Lord will teach, for he hath said, *His people shall be all taught of him.*

[illegible]

*Friends, let me tell you, your foundation is in earth, and therefore your dead Structure will fall to dust; and the house you have built, fallen on your own heads, all the powers of the earth being ready to uphold it. And that day I say which time no word remain, is left to either hand or foot, partly because I cannot see what shall come out of this world's chest; and partly concerning the matter.*

17. That I may not forget you, I will write a word of Comfort, I do know is all your fault, and will be to you come out of Babylon, your Land of Confusion, and where your Language is confounded, and come unto the true Tower of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and the way to a good understanding in the things of God, and in as much as you be faithful, may you become Gospel-Ministers, and receive Gospel-Remembrance.

By a Member of the true Church, and of that  
Society which the world calls Q. F. A.

**KEL**

*The End.*